

bility of telephone competition has been killed, with Lawson's open aid, and a body blow dealt to municipal ownership of telephones.

Elated over his success in helping the gigantic phone trust to establish an absolute telephone monopoly in Chicago, Lawson gives us a peep at what's coming next.

In a Daily News editorial he says: "With the absorption by the Chicago Telephone company of the automatic telephone system of the Illinois Tunnel company, Chicago perhaps has rid itself permanently of franchise grants for competitive undertakings in the public utility field."

Then he goes on to say: "UNIFICATION of service is the goal toward which the Chicago public has long been working. The street railways have been brought under one management, as have also the elevated railroads. The next step is to bring the two transportation systems together as a well co-ordinated whole. The city's various gas companies have been consolidated and so have the electric light companies. The city's great gas and electric light corporations have not been united legally, but they are subject to common financial control. It would be better if they were legally merged, provided the terms of the merger were proper. Intelligent supervision by official representatives of the people must be relied upon to secure good service at fair rates."

Now you can see what's coming. Lawson tells us that the "next step is to bring the two transportation systems together as a well co-ordinated whole." That means that the next unification job will be the welding together of the elevated and surface lines.

I can almost hear Walter Fisher licking his chops.

And when this job is done, another nail will be driven in the coffin of municipal ownership. The people were bunked in 1907, when provision was made whereby the people

MIGHT some day get municipal ownership of the surface lines. PERHAPS. But President Busby testified last year that while the surface lines could have been bought for \$55,000,000 in 1907, under the terms of the Fisher unification ordinance, the price in 1915 was \$145,000,000.

Of course, Lawson's wily Walter had worked it all out as the legal representative of the people in 1907 how they would get the money to buy the street railways. You will remember the city gets 55 per cent of the net profit. And in eight years Chicago saved up something like \$16,000,000 toward the purchase price.

But in that eight years, under the Fisher agreement, the price the city would have to pay had jumped from \$55,000,000 to \$145,000,000, or NINETY MILLION DOLLARS.

YOU can see what chance Chicago has of ever buying the surface lines, when the purchase price jumps \$11,000,000 every time we save \$2,000,000.

Now when we take the next step and add the millions of water in both surface and elevated lines together, the Lord only knows how many hundreds of millions we'll have to pay in order to get municipal ownership.

But the public utility gang isn't going to stop there—no siree Bob. The second step will be for the Commonwealth Edison to swallow up Peoples Gas.

As Lawson says, they "have not been united legally, but they are subject to common financial control."

You bet they are, Vic, and that goes for the Chicago Telephone Co. and the street railway as well as for Commonwealth Edison and Peoples Gas.

Sam Insull is practically running the whole public utility outfit, and the Marshall Field estate octopus is one of the biggest owners back of him.

The game evidently is to get all of the public utilities of Chicago un-